16 March

Finished *L'Enfant prodigue* a few days ago. As soon as I had suddenly glimpsed the composition of the poem in Berlin, I set to work at once; for the first time the writing followed the conception immediately. I was afraid, if I brooded over it any longer, of seeing the subject expand and deform itself. Moreover, I was sick of not writing anything, and all the other subjects that I am carrying about with me offered too great difficulties to be treated at once.

So that I have hardly spent a fortnight in elaborating and writing that *Enfant prodigue.*

I spent a week correcting it. Between Drouin and Copeau, like *L'Homme entre deux mattresses,*[8]*1* really enjoyed this job of perfecting and polishing,

I read today in Brunot's *Histoire de la langue frangaise:*[9] "Corneille and Racine were subject to the rule; they did not create it. If later on, through the influence of their genius, they became stylistic authorities, yet in their lifetime they humbly corrected themselves, the first to please Vaugelas, and the second out of respect for Father Bouhours, official arbiter of style." (Preface, p. xv.)

Yet I don't know if I am doing right in yielding to Copeau on this point: he claims that *lui parler* is incorrect. Indeed I find nothing in Littre to authorize it, and still there is no other means of expressing this relationship: "Quiconque veut parler au Pere doit *me parler.* — *Je lui parlais* fort aisement sans toL"

None the less I correct it.[10]

March

Yesterday went to hear Father Janvier at Notre-Dame. We had dined with Rouart Notre-Dame, badly lighted, disappoints us, but not Father Janvier, to whom we listen to the very end without being tired or bored. Constant political allusions help him to give color to his speech. A few seats in front of us, Boni de Castellane listens to the ex-

planation of his duties. Subject of the sermon: Error—sins through ignorance. Necessity of *informing oneself;* that is to say, of learning to know *Truth.* Ah, how beautiful it isl Let's rush out and imprison Galileo!

[8] The reference is to La Fontaine's *Fables,* Book I, 17: *The Middle-aged Man and His Two Mistresses,* in which the man is torn by the need of satisfying both at once.

[9] *History of the French Language,* an authoritative scholarly treatise.

[10] "Whoever wants to speak to the Father must speak to me. — I spoke to him quite easily without you/' The text of *Le Retour de 7enfant prodigue* has: **. . . *et qui veut comprendre le Pere doit m'ecouter. — Je Tentendais tres aisement sans toi**